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A Gypsyin



ALMA
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MEQUIDA

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

A - Gypsying

174
1874

BY
ANNA BLAKE MEZQUIDA



SAN FRANCISCO:
MARVIN CLOYD
1922

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To
MY MOTHER

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A-Gypsying

DAY after day in my staid, drab home,
My life moves slowly, a placid thing;
Only at heart have I learned to roam
And send my spirit a-gypsying.

Walls that enclose me are dull and gray,
But red is the fire of the Romany king,
And mad is the dance and wild the play
Where my spirit goes a-gypsying.

Bleak is the vista and humdrum the street,
But I catch the glint of a fairy's wing,
And watch the twinkle of elfin feet
When my spirit goes a-gypsying.

Common the sounds of an everyday world,
But witching the songs that free waters sing,
And gay are the notes from the treetops hurled
As my spirit goes a-gypsying.

Guarding my door stern Duty stands,
But the dream-gates lie in magic ring
Through which I pass to enchanted lands
With other souls gone a-gypsying.

WINDOWS

MY house has windows that are wide and high ;
I never keep the curtains drawn,
Lest I should miss some glory of the sky,
Some splendor of the breaking dawn.

My heart has windows ; the long years have shown
That they must never be shut fast,
Lest I should come to find the ivy grown,
And warm Love cold and dead at last.

My soul has windows where God's sun streams in ;
They never, never shuttered are,
Lest their closed blinds hide in my soul some sin,
And keep some lovely thing afar.

THE CROSSWAYS

THERE is a two-forked road leads from Today;
One path curls backward through the sun-
shot vale

Of Yesteryear; and one path marks the way
To forests unexplored and towering cliffs where
trail
Enshrouding clouds and fog-wreaths dank and
pale.

Some men there are whose footsteps fain would turn
Into the vâlley's well-remembered shade;
They haunt once more the mossy bank and fern,
The cooling streams, the flowered hill and glade,
The little lanes through which the sunlight
played.

And there are timid souls who dare not seek
Highways ahead nor tread those of the Past;
They fear the forest, shun that gray-swathed peak
And jagged stones like those they tripped on last;
The crossroads, safe, wide-spaced, these hold
them fast.

But there are some who would adventuring go—
Stout woodsmen, pioneers with axes bright;

Staunch mountain-climbers searching out the bow
Of promise on the rugged, mist-draped height;
And women bearing torches through the night.

These hold remembrance dear—yet not too dear;
The Past is but a fragrance, not a ghost
Dogging Today; they see the Future clear:
The untried ways are where God needs man most,
Hewing new paths for Truth's all-conquering
host.

THE CRY OF THE SOUL

YOUR form was cast in that heroic mold
Of some Norse viking famed in sagas old ;
Your brain was like a scintillating spark
That flashes into being in the dark ;
Your heart, though it was passionate and wild,
Could suffer at the whimper of a child
And feel the pain voiced in some dumb brute's cry ;
But nobler far, and greater yet was I,
Your soul, in God's own perfect image made
That you might walk upright and unafraid.
But you, in whom the power for good was born,
Put me to scorn.

The strength that in your mighty sinews lay
Was never spent to ease another's way ;
Your brain for arts and crafts did not suffice—
You found it but a marvelous device
To gain your ends ; your heart of love and fire
Was made the battleground of low desire.
But minds grow blank ; the charnal-house of lust
Shall crumble to decay and cleave to dust ;
The twisted, shapeless thing you made of me
Alone shall pass into eternity ;
Yea, I, whose voice you silence and you hate,
I stand and wait.

Upon seeing Rodin's statue

THE THINKER

TIME was, he held his brawny strength complete
To solve the weighty problems of mankind,
Till bowed in bitterness and in defeat,
The light of truth flamed through his sleeping
mind.

He saw the flowers creep up from the sod;
He watched the stars within their orbits swing;
He listened to each wild and living thing;
And as he marveled—lo, he thought of God!

THE THINGS WE LOVE BEST

THE things we love best are the little things
That play on the memory's slackened strings:

A baby's shoe, lopsided and scuffed;
A patchwork quilt that is faded and roughed;
An old rag-doll that is fingered and frayed;
A tinkly music-box loved hands played;
The scarred and battered soldiers of tin,
With bayonets chipped and paint worn thin;
The scratches upon the playroom door;
The hammered dent in the playroom floor;
The little black Testament thumbled and worn;
The volume of Whittier penciled and torn;
The package of letters yellowed with time;
The pudding-bowl bearing the Mother Goose rime;
The meerschaum pipe in the silent den—
The pipe that will never be smoked again.

Great costly paintings hang on my wall;
There's teakwood rare in the spacious hall;
White diamonds blaze on my idle hands;
Beside me a statue by Rodin stands;—
With these I would willingly, gladly part,
To keep those other things close to my heart.

ABSENCE ROAD

To A. A.

NO day is endless; time swings past,
And hours long waited come at last.
Though seas divided, all your stay,
I could not feel you far away,
For memory burns with deathless flame,
And love is love; no boundaries claim
The heart's desire and Thought's abode;
Yet I, who watched on Absence Road,
The days found long, and waiting drear;
But now that you again are near,
I only know that God is kind!

THE MEANING OF LOVE

FLUSH of dawn in a dull gray sky ;
Blaze of noon when the sun rides high ;
Mystic calm of a tropic night ;
Lambent glow of the northern light ;
Blossoming flower and budding tree—
These are the things love means to me.

Sound of bells on a Sabbath morn ;
Mother's croon to the newly born ;
Children's laughter and song of bird ;
Maiden vow at the altar heard ;
Loud heart-throbs of a slave set free—
These are the things love means to me.

Helping hand in an hour of need ;
Tender word and a kindly deed ;
Mind that harbors no evil thought ;
Honor that pays, but cannot be bought ;
Faith that bides through eternity—
These are the things love means to me.

Calvary's cross and a thorny crown ;
Battles fought and a foe cast down ;
Paths traced out where no way appears ;
Rainbows glimpsed through a vale of tears ;
Haven of rest on a stormy sea—
These are the things love means to me !

IT IS SO EASY TO FORGET!

WE find it easy to forget
Our careless word, our unkind thought;
We steel our hearts against regret
And think our joys are not dear-bought.

We like our pleasant, idle ways;
We like the High-road smooth and wide;
We laugh at the swift-flying days;
Forget Life's ever-flooding tide.

And when the hour of payment nears,
We fight and say we owe no debt;
We beg for mercy with our tears;—
It is so easy to forget!

THE FIVE FOOLS

"Fools, because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted." Psalms cvii: 17.

FIVE fools were they—though they knew it not—
Who met at a festal board ;
A rake was there, a gambler, sot,
A boss, and a social polyglot
Who fed his flocks on his neighbor's lot
And scorned the law of the Lord.

Each fool made Pleasure his only quest,
With happiness at the goal ;
And each fool told, at one's behest,
The road to travel he found the best,—
But he reckoned not with the Unseen Guest
And the thing we call a soul.

The sot set down his wine to say
The road wound through the cup ;
The gambler wagered 'twas found in play ;
The rake—he said that Happiness lay

On a woman's lips in the Great White Way
Before the sun is up.

Then he in the social hive a drone,
Though welcomed by young and old,
Who reaped the grain he had not sown,
And garnered the crops he had not grown,
And crushed the weak for himself alone,
Said Happiness lay in gold.

The King of the Bosses only laughed;
(He had picked a nation's locks!)
He jingled the coin he earned from graft,
And spat at the flag the breezes waft;
"Here's joy," he said, "to make you daft,
Within the ballot box."

They went their way and mocked at Sin,
Though Happiness fled the more;
And evil thoughts came trooping in;—
They trampled their friends nor recked of kin,
And danced in tune to the Devil's grin,
And Self they bowed before.

But Conscience saw and did not forget,
 Though they stifled her in the dark;
And Conscience asked of each his debt,
Which he had to pay—or is paying yet,—
So the road to Happiness proved Regret,
 And each fool missed his mark.

For Retribution's arm is long,
 And strikes with a deadly ease;
So he who laughed at a ribald song,
And made of Right a jest for Wrong,
And sneered at God when the wine ran strong,
 Drained life to the bitter lees.

And he who staked his all on a throw
 And the sheen of a horse's mane,
Whose money was easy to come and go,
Whose wife slaved on with nothing to show,
At the game's close came at last to know
 He had played with nought to gain.

The fool who held his gold so dear
 Paid triple in the end;

His gold was bright but his house was drear,
Where Love lived not, but only Fear,
With Death in the shadows lurking near;
And no man called him friend.

The King of the Bosses won the seat
That ever he most did crave;
His foes with fraud and lies he beat,
But Victory sat on him like Defeat,
And oft he longed in the battle's heat
For a soldier's honored grave.

And he who the primrose path had trod
Where the red lights glow and burn,
In agony felt Life's venging rod,
While the woman he wronged lay under the sod;
Oh, he knew it then—there was a God
And a law he could not spurn!

THE GOSSIPS

THE windows are shaded and soft lamps glow,
Though hot shines the sun on the court below,
For the tea is brewed, and we stir and sip,
While the gossip passes from lip to lip.

Gossip of fashions ; gossip of creeds ;
Gossip of saints' and of devils' deeds ;
Gossip of matron ; gossip of maid ;
Gossip of bills that are not yet paid ;
Scandal carelessly, idly spread,
Fang-tongued, lifting its serpent head ;
Sinuous thoughts that crawl and creep—
We set them loose while the tea-leaves steep.

The room grows stifling, and stale the air ;
Outdoors the roses are blooming fair ;
I wonder why one of us cannot say
One lovely thing on this lovely day ?

HARLEQUIN

I GAVE to *you* laughter—though I knew tears ;
“Ah, never,” you said, “was there man more
gay !”

I danced to your piping, my little dears,
And you did not see that my world was gray.

SAINT

YOU called me "Saint" for you heard me pray
And beheld the alms that I scattered wide;
You saw not my brother who fell that day
While I passed by on the other side.

SINNER

I COULD not walk with your slow, sure feet,
So you called me "Sinner," and placed the
brand;
Yet I've found men starving, and given them meat;
I have seen men stumble, and held out my hand.

THE FLOWER ON THE SILL

WHAT!—flowers on the East Side? Yes, we
make them by the ton—

Eight hands, with mine and baby's, sorting petals
one by one!

We're making blue forget-me-nots to earn our daily
bread,

And violets and roses till I wish that I were dead!

But I glance once at the window, and my angry
heart is still—

There's a real red flower blooming in a can upon
the sill.

Gay flowers of the East Side that our happy sisters
wear—

False, pretty, scentless flowers that but mock and
leer and stare!

How I hate their silken petals and their traitor
hearts of gold,

For my boy is growing stunted, and my girl's a
woman old!

And I fear my soul may shrivel, so I go and drink
my fill

Of the fragrance and the beauty of the flower on
the sill.

Man's flowers of the East Side—it's our blood that
makes them grow!

Man's flowers of the East Side—oh, I wonder does
God know?

Bides He only with the wealthy, while we worship
but His wraith?

'Mid these flowers of man's making it is hard to
keep one's faith;

So I creep close to the window when I ask my
Father's will—

I can pray when I am kneeling by God's flower on
the sill.

THE BLIND MAN

TWO men kept pace on a city street ;
The first man walked with swift, sure feet ;
The other came with tapping stick
And outstretched hand where the crowds were thick.

The first man hurried and did not see
A robin up in a lonely tree ;
But the blind man heard the wild, sweet note,
And pictured the throbbing scarlet throat.

Together they passed a florist's shop ;
The first man looked but did not stop ;
The other stopped, but could not look,—
Yet he saw gold primroses by a brook.

A scrubby cur came sidling by
With eager, gentle, wistful eye ;
The first man marked the mongrel breed ;
The blind man saw a friend in need.

He raised his sightless eyes to the sky
And knew that God kept watch on high;
The other schemed to throttle a foe—
That God looked on, he did not know.

Two men on a city street kept pace;
Keen gray eyes shone from one man's face;
The other had only the eyes of the mind—
Yet *this* man saw, while the first was blind!

SHADOWS

THE night comes down and shadows creep;
They climb with me the oaken stair;
Across the moon the gray bats sweep,
And foul the air.

I hide in bed and close my eyes;—
I feel the shadows stir and crawl;
Within my room a blind bat flies
Against the wall.

And yet a strange voice whispers low:
Had I but walked with lifted head,
Had I but turned and faced the foe,
They would have fled.

THE WOMAN'S COURT

“NO place for a lady!” the court guard said.
Through a sweating crowd I pushed ahead
And found a seat by the railing wide;
A touseled infant slept at my side;
The air was hot and heavy and dead;—
“No place for a lady!” the court guard said.

“Jane Doe!” droned a voice; and a hussy bold,
With painted cheeks and hair too gold,
Stepped brazenly forth and took her place
With swinging, panther-like, easy grace;
As young as Youth and as old as Time,
Wearing the baubles of sin and crime;
She bent on the Judge her melting smiles—
A woman of Babylon’s ancient wiles.
“Ninety days!” he said. She snarled at that;
They bore her off like a clawing cat.

A shabby old woman, wrinkled, frail,
Moved frightenedly up behind the rail;
She had robbed a shop of some Crepe de Chine
Because: “My gal—she was dressed so mean
She was shamed to go out with her beau

To the chauffeur's ball and the movie show."
The Judge passed sentence wearily;
She cast one pleading look at me;
"I was never in jail!" I heard her say
With trembling lips, as they led her away.

Came a haggard thing, loose-lipped and white,
With shaking hands that betrayed her plight;
On her person a dram of heroin;
On her face the ravages of her sin;
A clean face once; a face not bad;
The Judge looked at her a little sad;
Her first offense—so he let her go;
The fiends of dope were torturing her so!

Harpies and victims—the Judge looked bored;
Into the courtroom the sunlight poured;
I could not breathe and I stumbled out;
In my ears a laugh rang like a shout;
To my soul I put the question straight:
What part played *I* in their sordid fate?
What guilt was mine in the lives they led?—
"No place for a lady!" the court guard said.

THE TWO SPIRITS

I N my soul the pagan spirit
And spirit of Christ make war,
But whenever the pagan conquers,
The Christ-soul struggles more;
Yet at times in wilful blindness
I say to the white soul: "Go!"
And I camp on the trail of Pleasure,
And reck not what I sow.

Then the wanton soul makes merry
And challenges from my eyes,
And it lures with a care-free laughter,
And honor and truth defies;
And the pagan souls about me
Come eagerly to my call,
But the sad, sad eyes of Jesus—
They patiently follow all;

Till the shame of my wrong-doing
Burns fierce as a white-hot brand,
And I thrust the pagan from me,
And sturdily take my stand
By the side of truth and honor,

Till joy that is all Divine
And the peace of God's own making
Steal into this heart of mine.

In my soul the pagan spirit
And spirit of Christ make war;
But the evil spirit weakens
As godliness conquers more;
Yet for all my hard-won battles,
I pity the pallid soul
That has felt no need of fighting,
Nor gallantly sought the goal.

INSPIRATION

A METEOR flaming through the night;
A quivering moon-ray silver-white;
A violin's elusive strain
That softly merges joy and pain;
A seed new-sprouted from the sod;
A star-trail winding up to God.

FOG

YOU are all things to me—
All mystery!
A silver harem veil
That hides dark eyes
And smiles and glad surprise;
You are a mist of tears—
The welling up of sorrow in the heart;
You are a dull, gray cloak for fears;
And you are mother-wings
That cover all small frightened things
And guard them in a world apart;
You are white, yearning, gentle hands
That soothing touch my aching breast
And bring me rest;
You are the cool, sweet breath of Night
Whispering all dream-delight
To tired lands;
You are the wild, brave, free
Salt-spume of the restless sea;—
All things! All mystery!

THE FOUR WINDS

EAST WIND—wind of all dawning hopes,
Fresh from the haunts of the rising sun,
Rollicking over the mountain slopes,
Whispering faith to a day begun—
When wakes my Love with the first bird's song,
Brave Wind of the East blow strong, blow strong!

WEST WIND—wind of a maiden's dreams,
Tinged with the gold of a sunset's glow,
Snatching the young moon's silvery beams,
Pacing the star-trail to and fro—
For her I offer a lover's plea:
Fair Wind of the West blow free, blow free!

SOUTH WIND—wind of the heart's desire,
Scorching one's spirit with burning breath,
Shaming the heat of the desert fire,
Bring new life and heralding death—
My Love is only a trusting child;
Hot Wind of the South blow mild, blow mild!

NORTH WIND—wind of the soul's defeat,
Nipping youth's vision with wintry blast,
Riding the storm with your snow and sleet,
Mocking life's wrecks all about you cast—
My Love is frail for your chilling blight;
Harsh Wind of the North blow light, blow light!

MY SWEETHEART

OUT of the soul of a pansy,
A thought that is sweet and true,
Takes wing on the breath of morning
To dwell all the hours with you.

Out of the heart of the ages,
A love that has sprung full-grown
Pays homage to you, my sweetheart,
As suppliant to a throne.

THE STRANGER

ONE came and stood beside my bed at night
All sable-clad and girt with tongues of fire;
Her hands were scarred and on her feet so white
There shone the cruel mark of stone and brier.
I looked, and Ease fled laughing from my side,
While Joy sprang back and bade me let her go;
"You shall not leave me thus," I wildly cried,
"With this hard-visaged one I do not know!"
But they, the ready-voiced, were stricken dumb,
And only that sad stranger whispered, "Come!"

She led me out into the starless dark
That guards the dreary vale of wakefulness;
At morn I listened for the happy lark,
And heard the screams and wailings of distress.
Thus ever up and onward toiled we two,
Until it seemed my straining heart must burst;
I could not pierce the endless forest through,
Nor find a stream at which to slake my thirst.
"Is it," I moaned, "to show me God's great wrath,
You lead me ever up this rocky path?"

She answered not by word or look or sign,
As on she dragged me mile by weary mile;

But foes, long held in hate, laid hands in mine,
And one I had despised gave me a smile.
I caught a sobbing child up to my breast,—
The sorrows of the world lay on my heart,
And lo, I stood upon the mountain's crest
Just as the sunbeams tore the clouds apart.
Dear God, I had not seen Thy love so plain
Had I not climbed the stony steeps with Pain!

LINES TO AN INVALID

THINK not we count you as one tossed aside,
A broken bit of driftwood on Life's shore,
Your frailty is whiplash to our pride
Who in our strength have not accomplished more.

Poor fettered soul! 'Tis hard to see the plan
That holds you back from mingling with the
crowd,
To fathom the great reason why Life's span
For some is sunshine and for others cloud.

And yet there is a law of recompense—
Our feet, untrammelled, are content to plod;
You in your travail scale the heights immense
And lithesome tread the starry paths of God.

Yours is the vision, yours the fertile brain,
The hearing ears, the understanding heart,
You are the teachers of the world, through pain,
You gallant sufferers in your world apart!

ONLY A DOG

In honor of all dogs, and in memory of
"Baldy of Nome."

ONLY a dog, you say, has died?
Only a dog! Yet by my side
He has patiently mushed through Arctic snow;
He has galloped the hills where the poppies blow;
He has crossed bleak wastes on limping feet;
He has pattered along a city street.

The gray wolf's cunning, the shepherd's heart—
They taught him how to play his part!
When the Northern winter shuts down fast
I have seen him daring the icy blast
With a sled food-laden for men snow-girt,
Or bringing a doctor to someone hurt,
Gallantly leading his racing pack
With never a whimper nor turning back;
Doing the best that his dog-heart knew—
To the stern hard North-law staunchly true.

Where the Coast Range dips to the emerald sea
He has made his bed 'neath the pines with me;
He has shared my meal at a rough wood fire,
While his soft eyes fathomed my least desire;
With hackles rising and low-drawn growl
He has warned of marauders that lurk and prowl;
And when I have longed for a city's fare,
He has faced uncomplaining the pavements' glare.

He has been my friend when I needed a friend,
Through lonely nights that seemed never to end;
Or mischievous, gay, as a little boy,
He has sought a share in my meed of joy;
Fearless, tireless and loyal till death,
Speaking his love with his final breath.
Last night, as the moon dropped low, I prayed
To face *my* Master as unafraid.

Only a dog, you say, has died!
Only . . . a dog.

THE LITTLE VANISHING MEN

THERE is an Indian legend still held true
That has been handed down from early days :
That hidden in the mists and drops of dew,
In trees and grass and tassels of the maize,
Are "little vanishing men" who tell
The greater gods how we poor mortals walk
In wicked ways, or ways the gods hold well,
And whether ours be good or evil talk.

When brother wrongs a brother, the gods know ;—
The little hidden men have seen and told ;
Or when a noble deed is done, they go
And bear it to the gods like so much gold.
A legend old ! A fancy quaint and queer !
Yet is there one among us who can say
There are no little hidden men to fear ?
No little kindly men to watch today ?

When we let slip in anger some harsh word
That burns and stings, then melts into the air,
Can we be sure no other ears have heard ?
No gods have wept because we spoke not fair ?
Or when some little tender deed of love
Like precious seed within our heart has birth,
Can we not dream the very stars above
Shall whisper it to far ends of the earth ?

THE CITY OF HERITAGE

(Prize Poem, Newark Anniversary Poem Contest)

DOWN where the swift Passaic
Flows on to the placid bay,
Where the marshes stretch to the restless sea,
And the green hills cling in the mountain's lee,
There the sad-eyed Lenni-Lenape
Unchallenged held their sway.

Gentlest of all their neighbors,
Proud race of the Delaware,
They lived in the land where their fathers dwelt,
They killed the game and they cured the pelt,
And marked the blue in the wampum belt—
The purple and blue so rare.

When day tripped over the meadows
Fresh as a maiden trim,
They skirted the trails where the black swamps lie,
They notched the cedars to guide them by,
And wandered free as the birds that fly
Beyond the river's rim.

But few were the moons that silvered
The mountain's hoary side,
When over the banks where the waters foam,

Over the fields where they loved to roam,
Into the heart of their forest home
 They watched the pale-face stride.

Unconquered, and loath to conquer,
 They hid the arrow and bow ;
The mat was spread for the honored guest ;
They hung bright beads on the stranger's breast,
And mutely, singing, they bade him rest
 Before the camp-fire's glow.

The suns of a hundred noondays
 Blazed down on river and hill,
And the pale-face walked in the red-man's land ;
A pious, fearless and strong-souled band,
For home and for country they took their stand,
 And served God with a will.

Where the waters gleamed in splendor,
 And the meadows glistened green,
They founded a town with an English name ;
Their sternness shielded it like a flame,
And woe to the creature of sloth or shame
 Who dared let himself be seen !

They founded the house of learning ;
 They built them the place of trade ;
They guarded their laws by the force of might—

The laws that they held as a free man's right;
And first to pray, they were first to fight
 When foemen stood arrayed.

And staunch were their children's children,
 Brave men of a stalwart breed,
Who fought for the land where their fathers fought,
And kept the faith that was dearly bought,
That a brother-man, in the shackles caught,
 Forever might be freed.

And into the growing city
 Poured German and Celt and Scot,
All seeking the land of the sore-oppressed—
The land that all free-born souls had blest,
And put of their manhood's brawny best
 Into the melting pot.

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The moccasined feet have padded
 Into the silence vast,
And the smoke-stacks belch where the camp-fires
 glowed,
Yet the white man reaps what the red man sowed,
For the friendliness to the stranger showed
 Shall live while the town shall last.

Unfearing, true and sturdy,
The Puritan left his mark;
Though he sleeps beneath the grassy sod,
Though a million feet o'er his bones have trod,
Yet he leaves his faith and his love of God
To light men through the dark.

The soldier's battles are over;
His deeds but a written page!
Now the living pass by his low green tent,
But the patriot fires of a young life spent,
And a country whole from a country rent
He leaves to a future age.

The toiler that strove and builded,
And into the furnace hurled
Not coals alone, but his hopes and dreams,
Has lighted a beacon that ever gleams,—
While ships that sail on a hundred streams
Shall bear his gifts to the world.

Then rise to your heritage, Newark!
It cannot be swept away
Like chaff by the sullen north winds blown,
Or barren seed that is lightly sown,
For out of the past has the present grown—
The city men love today!

DRUMS

DRUMS and flags and a call to arms,
Kisses of quick farewell,
Quip and laughter for war's alarms,
Scorn for a battle's hell!

Drums and bugle and marching feet,
Music and swift command,
Thrill of joy at a foe's defeat,
Love for the native land!

Drums and cannon and shot and thrust,
Curses and war's hot breath,
Hatred of brother and blood-red lust,
Famine, destruction, death!

Drums, and up in the sky a cloud;
Shouts, and a dying groan;
Silence—over the earth a shroud;
Peace, and a long-drawn moan!

THE PEOPLE'S PLEA

HOW long must men's wild passions rear
Their hydra heads, and stupid Fear
Hold thrones in thrall and men as slaves,
While armored ships ride on the waves,
And forts keep guard, and mailed hordes throng,—
O Lord of Hosts, how long, how long?

How long must Honor, nation-wide,
Self-nurtured by a foolish pride
And bound by pledges dead hands wrote,
Make brother spring at brother's throat,
While Glory waits upon the strong,—
O God of Life, how long, how long?

How long must Progress shackled stand
While Strife lays tribute on the land,
And deeds for human betterment
Fall to the earth like bullets spent,
And Right, blind-eyed, give place to Wrong,—
O Lord of Light, how long, how long?

How long must fields of grain run red
And yield their daily crop of dead,
And helpless women pay the price
Of War's mad, futile sacrifice,
While nations chant their battle song,—
O God of Love, how long, how long?

THE VOICES

A Pæan of Peace

Voices, voices everywhere,
Voices here and voices there,
Voices of the earth and air
Crying, "Peace!"

THE weird, sweet voices of the silences :
The hush that overtakes the cannon's doom,
The soundless steps of Dawn from out the gloom
Where once the morning broke with crash and boom.

The onward rush of Life, retreat of Death,
The pause as of a nation taking breath ;
The calm that shuts the screeching mouth of hell ;
The still, small voices saying, "All is well!"

The noisy voices—voice of fife and drum,
The tramp where liberating armies come ;
The roar of factories, the ceaseless drone
Of busy looms that man had left alone ;
The tumult in the market places shrill ;
The creak and thud of plows upon the hill ;

The throb of steamers churning through the waves;
The wild huzzas of men no longer slaves;
The mighty voice of all Democracy
Exulting, "Free! Free! Free!"

The witching voice of Nature softly tuned:
The blackened trees that call the birds to nest
With promise of green leaves; the stir and quest
Of budding plants to heal Earth's riven breast;
The grass, the fruit, the grain, the tasseled corn
Crying, "It is our resurrection morn!"
The silver drip of rain, the fall of snow
On battlefields where soldiers no more go;
The crackling home-fires burning warm and bright
On long-cold hearths; the merry lamps alight;
The sweet-toned bells—torn from a ravished shrine
Of France to merge into a bullet's whine—
Across the universe now sing and sing,
Outclanging bells that in the belfries ring,
Until the world takes up the glad refrain
That Peace—Peace has come again!

And human voices, swelling, soaring high,
One voice united reaching to the sky!
The laughter of a child, a woman's song,

Proclaiming Right has triumphed over Wrong;
The shouts of free men breaking prison bars;
The loud Te Deum just beyond the stars;
And speaking unto lonely hearts and sad,
The voices of the living dead: "Be glad!
Look up! Rejoice! You ushered in the day
When greed and hate and madness pass away;
The glory-day when wars on earth shall cease—
The Day! Man's day! God's day of Peace!"

Voices, voices everywhere,
Voices here and voices there,
Voices of the earth and air
Crying, "Peace!"

THOSE FIRST THANKSGIVINGS

S HALL we not pause, as we make holiday,
To think of those Novembers harsh and gray
Our fathers spent on stern New England's soil?
They reckoned not the bitterness and toil,
The sacrifice, the hardships and the strife,
The struggle yet to wage for home and life,
But watched the bursting of the sterile sod
With shoots of green, and gave their thanks to God.

Shall we not pause one moment on our way,
As we make joyous, carefree holiday,
To think of those Novembers long ago?—
Of stony ground the Pilgrims toiled to sow;
Of rivers bridged; of tangled forests cleared
To pave the way for cities we have reared;
Of schools and churches built; of brave lives spent
For liberty and faith and high intent;—
Shall we, whose blessings are so richly poured,
Forget to say a simple "Thank Thee, Lord?"

A PRAYER

O Babe the wise men hailed at birth,
Be with all children; guard and keep
Thy little ones; and as they sleep,
Send blessings to the waifs of earth!
Yea, hear us, Saviour of mankind,
Thine elder children need Thy care—
Poor wayward souls they know not where
They go; and, Shepherd, some are blind!

O crucified and thorn-crowned King,
Watch o'er the rulers of the world.
For some must stand with banners furled,
And some must hear the nations ring
With curses; teach them wisdom, Lord!
Let greed and madness pass away,
And hate no longer love betray,
While o'er men's souls Thou keepest ward.

O Jesus of the nail-torn hands,
And bleeding feet and riven side,
Be with all sufferers far and wide—
Sad women mourning through the lands

For tortured sons and dear ones slain,
All those to whom life says, "Turn back!"
And those who twist upon the wrack
Of fevered nights and days of pain.

O Christ, Thou Conquerer of death,
When swift and dark the shadows fall
In silent rooms, and that last call
Sounds clear upon the night-wind's breath,
Be Thou not far, nor vigil cease!
Thou comforter, Thou power to save,
Thou mighty victor o'er the grave,
To men and nations grant Thy peace!

MY FRIEND

HE tells me there is sunshine in my hair
Like gold of Western sky at daylight's end,
Nor sees that other women are more fair,—
Because he is my friend.

He overlooks the small, mean things I do,
Some thoughtless word that I can never mend;
He holds his course beside me, steady, true,—
Because he is my friend.

He shares my joys; in bitter, darker hour
I know that he will come and courage lend,
His tenderness unfolding like a flower,—
Because he is my friend.

He sees in me all virtues rare and sweet;
How carefully that flame of love I tend!
I could not know more cruel, black defeat
Than just to lose my friend.

SHADOW LAND

FRAGRANCE of lilacs dew-sweet in the morn,
And budding roses' faint exotic breath
From out the heavenly gardens swiftly borne,
Have drifted through the barriers of death
And let me dream we wander hand in hand,
As you go plucking blooms in Shadow Land.

Last night while listening to the restless trees
I watched the lithesome antics of the spheres—
A comet running from the Pleiades,
And Venus mocking Mars—till through my tears
I saw you romping with the starry band
In God's vast playground up in Shadow Land.

And yesterday a lad's laugh ringing true
Came rippling gaily down the Milky Way,
And by that sign, within your arms, I knew,
Were gathered all the little souls that stray,—
For that great heart of yours would still demand
To mother all the babes in Shadow Land.

A sunbeam rollicking across the room,
Where lay the dust upon your vacant chair,
Put swift to flight the clinging motes of gloom,
And whispered to my heart that you were there
Like some bright angel at my side to stand
As I toil on through this—my Shadow Land!

GREAT HEART

To Phoebe Apperson Hearst

YOU smiling lived, and smiling went away !
Great heart, you would be sad were we to pay
In tears our tribute. We would wreath your grave
With joy, and write the happiness you gave.

The laughter of a little orphan lad
You lifted from the wayside and made glad ;
The girl you started on the upward road ;
The toiler whom you helped to bear the load ;

The aching hearts that beat against your breast
And found, in your great understanding, rest !
The luckless souls you dragged from misery
And set upon Life's highway, joyous, free ;

The works you wrought in silence ; gifts you made
Because you loved—not for the world's parade ;
The torch of learning that you set alight
To blaze a way through ignorance and night ;

The counsels that you offered, thoughtful, wise ;
The kindliness that looked out from your eyes ;
The courage and the mighty power of good
You taught to Youth by your white womanhood—

These pay you greater homage than our tears ;
These live beyond your own brief span of years.
Dear friend, dear friend, the selfless path you trod
Has marked for us the starlit trail to God !

MY MOTHER'S HANDS

NOT soft like hands that never toil—
Fair hands that fear Life's grime and soil,
But roughened hands that fall as light
As snowflakes drifting down the night.
Strong hands—hands tigress-strong and bold,
Strong in defense and strong to hold;
Kind hands stretched out in hour of need
To do some little tender deed;
Calm hands that have the power to soothe;
Cool, peaceful hands that slowly move;
Unselfish hands that never know
Desire of grasping; that bestow
Largess of love, and give again,
Though giving shall be fraught with pain;
Dear hallowed hands that clasp in prayer;—
Hands that enfold me everywhere!

THE VALLEY

A HUNDRED hands will snatch Happiness up
And toss it along; men's lips will sip
When Joy is the potion in my cup;
By my dancing feet their feet will trip.

All laughing they come to join my play;
Their throats are filled with the songs I know;
They ride with me on the broad Highway,—
But down in my valley they may not go.

My Valley of Sorrow or Valley of Pain,
Or Vale of the Shadow that winds away—
If tomorrow the road lies starkly plain,
I have today; oh, I have today!

I can capture a sunbeam and hold it fast;
The fragrance of flowers; the gleam of a star;
And lovely memories out of the past
To bear away to my valley far.

Today I can answer an agonized cry,
Or bend my back to a neighbor's load,

That I may carry my shoulders high,
And bravely step on my rocky road.

I can play my part in man's onward march :
There are cities to build, and waters to turn
Into the desert's blighting parch ;
There is peace to bring where hatreds burn.

I can make a child's glad laugh ring free—
A laugh that will rise to the Great White Throne ;
How sweet to carry its echo with me
As I go down to my valley alone !

IF I WERE NIGHT

IF I were Night I would spread my wings
Above all little things
So tenderly, so light,
That they would never know a fear,
If I were Night.

I would lay a blanket on the violet beds,
A fleecy blanket made of mist
Star-kissed;
I would close the eyes of pansies with a touch
Of mother-fingers;
I would whisper with soft breezes
To budding trees that take affright
At boisterous winds,
If I were Night.

I would drop sweet coolness on the desert
For frail creatures small
That glide and hide
Beneath the cactus and the sagebrush gray
Throughout the burning, breathless day;
I would draw down rain from out the clouds

To fill the tiny water-hole again,
And save lost young things from the blight,
If I were Night.

I would steal across the window-sill
Where babies sleep,
And hold them in my arms
Safe from alarms,
And rock them on a moonbeam silver-white,
If I were Night.

I would creep into the fold of sheep
And hunt small lambs that bleat
In shivering terror of fierce wolves that prowl,
And point the star that shone on Bethlehem,
And put their fears to flight
By telling them their Shepherd still keeps guard,—
If I were Night.

THE BRIDGE

I BUILD a little bridge from day to day
Against the hour the tides of trouble rise;
A bridge of memories to span the way
To fragrant woods and azure, sunny skies.
A memory of love that stood the test;
A handclasp given when my heart was sore;
A tender, kindly deed that came to rest
Within my house despite the fast-shut door;
And pictures painted with a master brush:
A sunset on the bosom of the sea;
A nightingale that sang at twilight hush;
A silver fog; an autumn-tinted tree;—
I build a little bridge across the mud
Of pain and grief against the time of flood.

CARAVANS

A CROSS the silent desert of my years
The caravans, rich-laden, slowly wind;
I gather up their treasures with swift tears,
The memories of joys left far behind:
The wild lark's song that pierced me through
The morning I first walked with you,
When all the world was beautiful and kind.

Rare, lovely stuffs from strange and foreign lands—
The cities where we lingered, you and I;
Caressingly I stretch my eager hands
To hold those golden hours until I die:
One moonlit night in mad Stamboul;
One noon at India's sacred pool;
The day we said to Paris gay good-bye.

The precious gems of quiet hours at home—
The nights we spent before the firelight's glow,
I with my needle, you with some old tome;

And nights you sang me love-songs sweet and slow ;
The long, long night we fought with Death,
Upon my neck I felt your breath
As you above the tiny crib bent low.

The frankincense and myrrh of word and deed—
The passionate small whisperings apart ;
Your staunch defense in my dire hour of need ;
The ointment poured upon my aching heart ;
The kindly things you said and did,
The little things you shyly hid ;—
They come ! the caravans from out Life's mart.

THE SPINNERS

I THOUGHT I would run where my wild heart
led;—

I did not count on the sisters three,
Who sat with spindle and scissors and thread;—
Desire was the only law to me.

I thought I would take my joys where I list;
I said I would wander reckless and free;—
I did not note in the white dawn mist
The flashing hands of the spinners three.

I vowed I would gather earth's rubies and gold;
What matter though others might trampled be!
The world's rich treasures my hands should hold;—
The three grim Fates I would not see.

But as I was dancing one mad, sweet day,
I heard the scissors click warily;

I saw Life's pattern spread drably gray,
And hated each one of the old hags three.

Yet they found me a road where the sunlight played ;
They showed me a child at her mother's knee ;
They taught my feet in a brook to wade ;
They made me hark to a bird in a tree.

“LIKE SHIPS THAT PASS”

BRIGHT noon ;
The rushing currents of a city street,
And midnight in my soul ;
I felt the bitter waters roll
And beat.
And then *you* passed
Borne on the waves like some gay barkentine ;
You saw that I was struggling, wallowing
Against the tide ;
You looked into my eyes and smiled—
A soft, warm, friendly smile
That cried :
“Godspeed ! Hold fast ! Keep on !”
And then the waters rolled between.
It was so brief a while
You smiled at me !—
It seemed
Eternity.

Oh, I have sailed the seven seas since then !
And captained many ships, and men,
And touched at many a port.
My bark has idled lotus-days
In fragrant islands of the sun,

And fought
Its way to harbor in the marts of trade ;
And I have run
Against an icy blast that flayed
My sail to tatters.

I have known joy and love and life
And sorrow that was death ;
I have gone heavy-laden
With rich stuffs and gold,
And sailed with empty hold ;
My ship has rocked in soporific calm,
And weathered gales that sent alarm
Into the stoutest heart.

There was but once I came near foundering :
That time you passed in my soul's night
And flashed the light
Of your warm, friendly smile.
Oh, such a little while
The Passing !
And then the ocean flung us far ;
But your "Godspeed !" has flamed across the sky
Of Life,
A beacon like the white North Star
To set my compass by.

THE LONELY HOUSE

WITHIN my house there are no children's voices ;
 No patter of small feet ;
No boisterous shouts ; no merry, treble laughter ;
 No bedtime kisses sweet ;
There are no dolls and tops dropped in the hallway—
 My house is very neat.

My house is filled with ivories from China ;
 Rich tapestries from Spain ;
My house is filled with women's idle chatter
 Like dripping of soft rain ;—
I wonder will my neighbor's little tow-head
 Come visit me again ?

THE CAPTIVE

L IKE some lone eagle brooding in his cage,
Who mourns for mountain crags and wind-
swept skies,
Or some gay cockatoo who screams in rage
For tropic glades of his lost Paradise,
Thus I, within the circle drawn by Fate,
Must mark my weary days and yearn and wait.

No Caesar gazed on many-templed Rome
With larger hopes than I looked out on life;
My vision leaped the confines of my home—
That sordid scene of misery and strife—
And winged my feet that they might find the way
From murk and darkness out into the day.

I watched the world strain at her swaddling bands,
And laughed to think how I should sway men's
thought,
And how the sore-oppressed of many lands
Should gain through me the freedom that they
sought;

Colossal deeds and vast heroic schemes
I planned within the magic realm of dreams.

Today, from out my window dimmed with smoke,
The dull, drab vista of my youth appears ;
Here I have bent the back to duty's yoke,
And held me to the treadmill all these years
A captive ! Nay, my spirit heeds no bars,
But conqueror still it soars among the stars !

THE DREAMERS

AS children need the fairies, so do we
Have need of dreamers ; men whose eyes can see
Beyond the rocky road we tread today
To wide, sweet paths where roses line the way ;
Beyond the prairie and the barren plain
To harvest time and ripened fields of grain ;
Beyond the furnace's mad roar and glare
To rivers spanned and cities rising fair ;
Beyond the little sordid things of life,
Beyond the meannesses, the hate and strife,
To deeds of faith and love and high intent,
And gallant, brave young lives in service spent ;
The dreamers—who can look up from the sod
And see beyond the farthest star to God !

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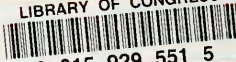
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